

INSIDE : CND Reports; Beyond The Left

ELECTIONS GUYED

GUY FAWKES, as anarchist badges and posters remind you, and as you remembered once more on 5 November, was the only person who ever went to Parliament with honest intentions. In fact he didn't, if the most recent research is to be believed, but was either an agent provocateur or a fall guy or both. He wasn't going to blow up Parliament at all, or only with the most dishonest intentions....

Another myth gone! Not that we really need any myth to tell us that, however honest the intentions that anyone may take to Parliament, they might just as well be thrown on to the bonfire with poor old Guy for all the good they do. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as we know, whether you travel by way of the scaffold with Fawkes or by way of the more gradual methods known around the world as parliamentary democracy.

A lot of guys have been winning and losing elections during the past few weeks, almost as if they were trying to celebrate the 375th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, whoever it was. In West Germany the Social Democrats and Free Democrats have just beaten the Christian Democrats, though the issue was presented as the smooth incumbent versus the rough challenger. In Australia the Liberals have just beaten Labour, though the issue was presented as the tough incumbent versus the soft challenger. In Jamaica the People's Party has been beaten by the Labour Party, though the issue has been presented as wild incumbent versus tame challenger. In the British Labour Party there have been four candidates for the leadership, the choice being between



a rightist who will fight the left until he needs its support and a leftist who will betray the left when he doesn't need its support. And in the United States we have seen Tweedledum beat Tweedledee, or vice versa, and the issue has been whether the incumbent or the challenger is the most absurd choice for the leader of the most powerful country in the world, so that more than half the electorate couldn't be bothered to vote for either of them.

Of course it is even worse without democracy, where there are no elections or fake elections or where people do blow each other up. But the anarchist point is that democracy isn't the solution to the problem but

is itself part of the problem. There is a time for voting and there is a time for choosing representatives. We can't all make decisions all the time. There is even a time for elections, if only to vote the bastards out, as happens even in the best-regulated democracies -- such as India only a few years ago -- even if the result is to vote some new bastards in. But we maintain that it is a bad way to make the decisions which it is designed to make, and indeed that such decisions shouldn't be made at all.

We say that if the choice is voting for Cargan or Reater, or for Hoote or Fealey, then come back, Guy Fawkes, all is forgiven!

Prisoners of Politics

'AFTER a while we had to have all our joints bandaged, because they were only skin and bone or bedsores; or gangrene would have set in easily... I could smell death off myself, a sickly, nauseating stench'. So wrote Michael Traynor, a surviving striker in the Republican death strike of 1940, who only drew back after the death of two strikers and the promise of concessions which, in the event, failed to materialise. Things have changed dramatically since then: the resolve of the seven blanket men now on hunger strike in the so called 'dirty protest' has already been severely tested and their continued determination makes the recent fatuous government manoeuvrings appear all the more predictably short sighted.

Blame for the present crisis must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the odious Atkins, foremost among the many who have risen without trace. The order that male prisoners in the province could wear civilian clothes was trumpeted as a major concession which followed in the wake of an agreement last August to allow prisoners engaged in protest brief periods of parole. In fact, the civilian clothes will be official issue, not property belonging to the prisoners, and the decision is a contemptible and shallow subterfuge intended to avoid a politically damaging hunger strike whilst conceding nothing.

The statement of Michael Alison, Atkins's underling, that the decision is part of an 'ongoing evolution' in the development of the province's prison regime, is not wholly inaccurate. The move can be neatly dovetailed with such earlier stages in this evolution as the systematic use of torture, brutal interrogation techniques, juryless Diplock courts and convictions in the absence of witnesses or evidence to corroborate the confessions of the system's victims, among whom are the blanket men. The Amnesty report of 1977 and the Bennet Inquiry of 1979 catalogued these evolutionary excesses in great detail but next to nothing has been done to prevent them.

The net result of Atkins's decisions has been to provoke the manic Paisley into eruptions of uncontrollable but carefully rehearsed rage, accusing him of

capitulation to the IRA. In fact his magnanimous gesture of compassion was rather less than that, as was shown a few days earlier by his order to SAS terrorists to raid a house in West Belfast used by the prisoners' aid committee (an attack which proved totally counter productive). The real purpose of this decision, as stated by the prisoners themselves, was to stage an attempt to defuse the whole protest and deflect criticism in the face of a protracted hunger strike.

The truth that the myopic Atkins refuses to face is this: no cosmetic changes in the treatment of H Block prisoners will do any good until he concedes the demand for recognition of political status, which includes the right of prisoners to wear their own clothes and that of free association. After all, for prisoners whose arrest, detention, interrogation, trial and sentencing have all taken place under 'special' emergency legislation, the demand for special prisoner status seems reasonable and logical. In rejecting this demand out of hand, Atkins is certainly making the greatest mistake of his miserable career: it is probable that Whitelaw introduced the special category status as a direct result of the mass hunger strike in 1972, and the years leading up to the present crisis point, if anything, to an even harder resolve. By his recent show of ineptitude Atkins has simply brought the plight of those now on hunger strike into even sharper focus. If, as seems likely, he adopts the hard line attitude developed by Woy Jenkins, the confrontation will be one from which no face saving formula can ever emerge for, by operating in the shadow of twelve Republicans who have already starved to death this century, he is contesting the incontestable.

The prisoners in the Maze are writing another chapter in the long bloody struggle for a Republic, and the press will no doubt apply its usual prejudice and distortion to coverage of the strike. But there is another, far reaching issue that cannot be ignored: the men are victims of a government which has ensured convictions where none would have been forthcoming in the normal process of law and, in so doing, has made the independence

of the judiciary a laughing stock.

A warning lies here for all who fear the robust health of a state which accepts vetted juries, perjured evidence and a prejudiced judiciary as commonplace and where laws are manipulated as tools of oppression and division against an apathetic populace. The hunger strike of the Maze strikers is only matched by the insatiable appetite of a state in search of further excesses which, so far, has encountered little effective opposition.

R. T.

In the preceding article the writer argues that the H-block prisoners in Long Kesh should be given political status and we think that what he has to say on the matter is worth printing. As anarchists, however, we believe that the whole question of political status is meaningful only at the point where it becomes meaningful - in other words when all prisoners are regarded as political.

For wherever in the world we look we can find reasons for giving prisoners political status. In most countries people are imprisoned after trials in which the juries are non-existent or packed, in which defence rights are curtailed, or in which the laws pre-determine the verdict of guilty, and which are therefore mere, irrelevant formalities. Today in England there is a good case for arguing that anyone detained under laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Official Secrets Act, or indeed the Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Bill - most recent example of the way government can vote itself what powers it likes in no time, whenever it feels sufficiently threatened - should be given political status.

But why stop there? Why should it be more important to grant such status to the Long Kesh or Armagh prisoners than to those in Strangeways, Wandsworth or Holloway - yes, and Rampton too? Look at the histories of any number of men and women or children in such places and you will find them steeped in social and class injustice of no less political significance than the histories of their more organised counterparts in Northern Ireland. In the final analysis, we believe, there is not such a big difference between the Diplock courts of Northern Ireland and the magistrates' courts of England.

EDS

Kilner House

THE occupation of Kilner House in South London continues. The occupation is, so far, the biggest and most significant mass squat, 'against the cuts, against council house sales', in this specific instance to prevent the Greater London Council selling off a block of 60 renovated flats on the open market at £20,000 a go, and continues to draw interest and gain support. This is very encouraging and also vital as the squat is now of such significance, especially as Secretary of State Heseltine has stopped all council house building, that it needs to continue to set an example for action elsewhere along similar lines. **SEIZE HOUSING!**

Events: The court case of 22nd October was adjourned for three weeks to give the GLC time to produce documentation to the court on how the tenants were 'decanted' before renovation. This info was ordered by the judge. He also ruled that in future all subpoenas must have the courts 'permission' and this may make it difficult to get the GLC Housing Chairman, Tremlett, into court again. We're working on 'valid' reasons. The next court appearance is on the morning of Wednesday 12th November in the Strand. A demonstration will be held outside and support is welcome.

We still need to publicise the squat more, especially outside London, so anyone who can help please contact us at 'the Office', Kilner house. Messages of support welcomed as are donations. We may

end up with hundreds of pounds of court costs, meanwhile we need we need money for leaflets, posters etc. 'Kill the Cuts - Support Kilner House' badges available from us 15p each + postage.

Dr. Squatson
pp. The Occupants

The Office,
Kilner House,
Pegasus Place,
Clayton Street,
Kennington Park Estate,
London SE11

Errata: In the last article on Kilner House (Vol 41 No. 21). Line 3. The second word should read 'marked' not 'masked'. The seventh paragraph: '... the Stalinist "Morning Star"'. The 'Morning Star' is not Stalinist but Euro-Communist.

US Conference

PLAINFIELD, Vt.: In a major step forward for the anarchist movement, approximately 200 people gathered together over the weekend of 18-19 October at the bucolic Goddard college, for the founding session of the New England Anarchist Conference. The conference, organised primarily by Vermont anarchists, was also attended by delegates from the neighbouring states of New York and New Jersey.

Those attending had responded to the call for the creation of, 'an on-going body of anti-authoritarian affinity groups and committed individuals who are dedicated to the perpetuation of liberty and a truly substantive free society'.

A mailing announcing the conference had noted, 'We live today in a period of historic social crises - of crises produced by far-reaching imbalances between humanity and nature and between human and human. Indeed we may well be faced with the total annihilation of

human society in every form, if not the complete destruction of life on this planet.... If we wish to survive we must begin to live. In May-June, 1968, the students of Paris raised the magnificent cry: 'Be Realistic! Do the Impossible!' In the face of the crises that loom before us, we must now add: If we don't do the impossible we will surely wind up with the unthinkable!'

Although there was disagreement on the issue of pacifism, those present were in basic consensus on a wide variety of other matters - from ecology to racism and gay liberation to feminism. Delegates felt so strongly about the latter issue that the next conference, to be held in three months time, will focus exclusively on anarchist-feminism. The organisation plans extensive networking among regional affiliates.

Those interested in obtaining information on the fledgeling organisation, and in receiving a copy of its news letter, should write to: New England Anarchist Conference, P.O. Box 373, Burlington, Vermont 05402, USA.

S. Duncan Harp & L.N.S.

Protestors on trial

ON THURSDAY 20th November four people arrested during the May anti-nuclear action at Torness are pleading 'not guilty' to 'Attempting to Rescue a Prisoner' and 'Breach of the Peace' at the Sheriff Court, Haddington in East Lothian. On the trial date people will be picketing and taking protest action in Haddington - meet at the Sheriff Court, Council buildings at 9.30 am. Anti-nuclear activists who can't make it to Haddington are urged to take solidarity action in their own areas on the 20th.

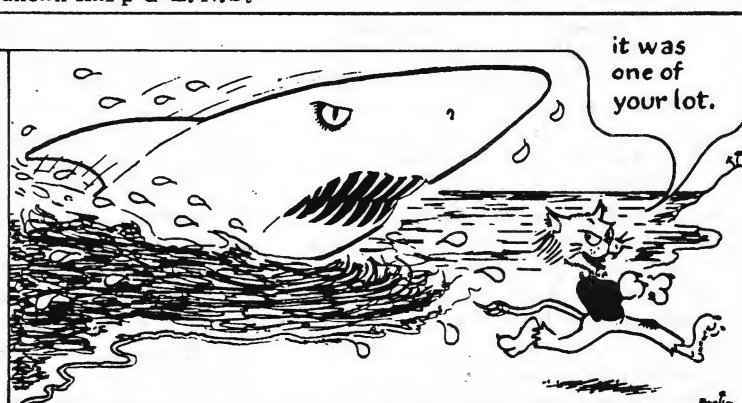
(See FREEDOM vol 41 nos. 21 and 15 for background details - Eds.)

KIDNAPED

Two of the May arrestees have already been tried. On Friday 26th September Tim Horrel was suddenly arrested in his home town of Reading,

continued on page 4

WILPCAT



continued from page 3
after the police had asked him to come into the police station 'for a chat'. He was flown north and held in Dalkeith Police HQ over the week end. The police alleged that he had failed to answer a summons relating to his May arrest. In fact he had never received a summons - and he had informed the police of his current address a month before he was arrested. On 29th September Tim was found guilty of 'Attempting to Rescue a Prisoner' and fined £50. In court Tim's lawyer accused the police of 'flagrant maladministration' - neither the Procurator Fiscal nor the police could offer any explanation as to Tim's kidnapping.

POLICE LIES EXPOSED

On 15th October Jonathan Walsh was found 'not proven' at Haddington District Court on a charge of 'Breach of the Peace'. In court the police witnesses were clearly shown to be lying to cover up an assault on a demonstrator by a police Inspector. Jonathan described how he had protested to the police Inspector about the officer kicking a demonstrator in the ribs as he was being dragged away. The Inspector immediately ordered Jonathan's arrest, and he and a police Constable seized hold of Jonathan.

PCs Eadie and Hunter claimed that the defendant had been shouting and swearing and linking arms with other demonstrators and so they had arrested him. Both claimed that no police Inspector had been

involved at any stage. Jonathan's lawyer then produced a photo which both PCs agreed showed Jonathan being arrested by PC Eadie and an un-named police Inspector! The Constables were unable to offer any explanation for this total contradiction of their evidence.

After both trials leaflets were distributed in Haddington denouncing the police kidnapping of Tim Horrel, describing the May arrests and advocating direct action to resist state oppression and stop nuclear power. Two more May arrestees have received summonses and are still awaiting trial dates.

DIRECT ACTION AND THE STATE CLAMP-DOWN:

The state is clamping down on anti-nuclear direct action - look for example at the heavy fines imposed on the demonstrators who stopped the nuclear waste train. If this increased state repression succeeds it will be a major defeat for the anti-nuclear movement. For only a wide-spread determination to physically stop nuclear developments and/or a large scale refusal to work in the nuclear industry has a chance of halting the governments plans for vastly increased reliance on nuclear energy. Those in power, in the state and in big corporations, have too many interests at stake to be swayed by protests which stay safely within 'constitutional channels'.

In taking direct action against nuclear power we're taking import-

ant decisions about society's development into our own hands. We're asserting that it's human needs that should count, not the interests of the state and big business. Direct action against nuclear power can be a step towards totally transforming society so that vital decisions such as our energy policy are made by and for everyone, instead of being the province of an elite.

It is vital that the anti-nuclear movement in Britain answers the attack of the state on direct action here with more direct action involving more people. Widespread and effective actions on the days of the Haddington trials can be part of this process - and at the same time we should be indicating our determination not to be intimidated by stating that we will be occupying at Torness next May.

For information about action at Haddington and leaflets about the trials contact, Torness Public Parks department, Box 23, c/o 163 King St. Aberdeen. Tel. Aberdeen - 637428 (Mike). For information about solidarity action elsewhere contact Hackney Anti-Nuclear Group, c/o Sun Power, 83 Blackstock Rd., London N4; Torness Alliance c/o Acorn Books, The Emporium, Merchant Place, Reading; your local anti-nuclear group - or create your own action!

Issued by Torness Public Parks Department (Aberdeen section).

No Nukes Music

Provisional Manifesto of NO NUKES MUSIC types.

The human race must decide in the next decade whether life on this planet is to survive; whether we are to continue to repeat our recent history through to its inevitable tragic conclusion or whether we are to fundamentally change direction and begin evolving towards a society where all people are free to combat the one remaining enemy - boredom; a society where the only task is to improve communications between individuals, free from sexism, ageism, racism, ego and all the schisms that have divided people from themselves and each other throughout the history of the globe.

We are here today to register our protest against the paranoid and life-destroying plans of the priests of power and purveyors of planned personal obsolescence. We are therefore the reappearance of a

desire to totally transform society that last appeared on the planet in the late sixties. The targets at that time were boredom and the Vietnam war; the targets this time are boredom, nuclear missiles and families and the western death culture. We are a re-emergence of the desire for total freedom that has been the constant theme and historical companion of rock and roll. Rock has always been the purest expression of the disgust felt by disaffected youth, and if we are to disarm and save the planet, it will be through spreading a coherent anti-profit social policy through this powerful educational medium. We have the whole 25-year history of rock to inspire and reassure us during this struggle which we cannot afford to lose.

We, the people who find Bowie saner than Thatcher, Hendrix

more together than any Rockefeller, are the ones who could expect the veiled support of off-planet intelligences in our struggle to survive, and it is surely inconceivably arrogant of the human race to consider itself the only intelligent life form in the universe.

Richard

SUPPRESSED NEWS CORNER

The Chinese have exploded an atom bomb in the atmosphere. The fallout and radioactive cloud reached Canada on 21 October 1980. Not a single speaker at the large CND rally in Trafalgar Square thought this important enough to mention.

PEPE

(Please send contributions for this series).

1 March 2 Views

THE CND demonstration in London on 26 October was certainly the largest protest against nuclear weapons in this country for at least 15 years. It was agreed that there were more people present than the organisers' target of 50,000 and even argued that there were more than 100,000: the correct total was probably between these two figures, but whatever it was there were more people there than CND has seen since the old days.

It was in fact very like the old days. Sometimes it seemed like the rerun of an old film, with the same people saying the same things in the same place as before. Sometimes it seemed like a reunion of old friends and enemies -- and their children, who now make up what CND call the Second Generation. This show can run and run.

But it was also very unlike the old days. Among new groups who appeared on the march were ecologists, gays, feminists, rock fans. Among new interests represented at the rally were a Catholic nun (whose comparison of nuclear war with abortion drew some boos) and the general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain (whose presence drew too few boos).

Some old lessons seem to have been learnt. The police allowed the march to move continuously from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square, which avoided any break and any serious trouble; there were only a dozen arrests all day. Other old lessons will have to be re-learned. The official organisation of the march and rally were far less efficient than in the days of Collins and Duff; it was intolerable that the speakers had finished before all the marchers got into the square, and that the speakers had given so little expression to the mood of the listeners. There was no one on the platform to the left of the Labour and/or Communist Parties, and only one person involved in the growing development of a direct action movement.

The anarchists have as much to learn as to teach. There must have been thousands of us there, but we had few banners and little concerted presence. Several hundred extra copies of FREEDOM were sold, but several thousand more could have been if we had been better

prepared. There were a few minor skirmishes involving anarchists -- especially a confrontation with some pro-Russian Spartacists and another with police cordons across Whitehall -- but we had no real idea what to do or how to do it. If we want to take on other left groups or the police we shall have to be much more certain about our aims and much more serious about our methods.

Meanwhile, back to the nuclear disarmament movement, where there is much to be done before the next big demonstration. M H

WE ARRIVED at the appointed place as we had been instructed by the wall posters. Most of us wore our badges that marked us as the tainted ones. Some, bravely parading their stigma, carried banners with our distinctive mark.

All was confusion as the regional Kommandants herded us into our pens which were marked out by white tapes. Harrassed Kommandants with sheets of paper or clipboards directed those who were lost to their units. There were about twenty of these columns side by side starting with those who had been found guilty of 'national' crimes. These were arranged behind their various banners marking them of being involved in particular activities. Then came the various regional units.

There were thousands of us - none of us seemed to be able to believe the extent of the gathering, the effectiveness of the round-up. Many wandered around in confusion crying out for their friends and desperately searching for their appointed places. There was much impatient shuffling and stamping of feet. Oberfuhrer Benn was even glimpsed at one stage looking very calm and almost unassuming. None would guess to look at him then the power of the man.

Then the time came to move off. Some looked in vain for the cattle-trucks and delousing sheds but most walked calmly and obediently out of the park to our eventual destination. Discipline was rigid. Any who marched out of step were dealt with quickly and efficiently by kapos* in armbands.

There was much confusion again and there were many hushed whispers about our destination. There were suggestions and innuendos about work camps, speeches, mass rallies and showers.

None really knew and none could have guessed how appalling the eventual fate was.

We were herded into a large square with a gigantic phallus in the centre. We guessed that this was one of the new monuments to the heroic age. Immense and impressive stone buildings were all around. We assembled in the square - all our many thousands filling the space and overflowing. It took many hours for us all to be forced into such a space. There was little room to spare and the crush was stifling.

Under the phallus was a massive appalling picture of a screaming baby. We all knew instinctively that this was the way it would be and the image was a pertinent reminder of our impending doom in the square. Some cried and shouted desperate oaths and imprecations but all in vain for the torture soon began.

How awful! how horrible! how appalling it was! Torment forced us to cry and shout as various Kommandants, Unterfuhrers and other members of the state Gestapo came forward on the platform under the ghastly picture and spoke, castigating us for being so remiss in our duty to the nation. At the end of, and indeed during, all the speeches, there was widespread wailing of grief from the crowd, realizing all too late their errors.

Then the climax.

Oberfuhrer Benn stepped forward. Powerless and scared most shouted a greeting in the desperate hope of ingratiating themselves with the regime. Benn seemed pleased with this impressive display of blind obedient docility and he even hinted at a possible reprieve. He truly is a clever man who knows exactly how to treat his underlings and how to force those who stray from the path to eventually praise him and grovel at his feet. It was truly impressive.

All this lulled many people into a false sense of security with some others a resignation that their fate was sealed. The former group were eager by then to join Benn's faction and accept the Oberfuhrer as their one true god - Ein Volk Ein Reich Ein Benn. The latter stood in docile acceptance and waited for the fire to start.

But not! We were not to witness this. Instead a fate far too horrible to contemplate. We were dismissed and sent back to our homelands to languish in miserable impotent boredom.

Curse those cunning bastards! How do we fight such brilliant manipulation? A curse on them forever!

DS

*internal prison camp leaders selected from amongst the prisoners.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTI

Anarchists and Science

Dear Freedom

The response triggered off in Nigel Pennick to one of Wildcat's antics seems remarkably 'serious' and reminds me of the comments made by Paul Feyerabend (in his book Against Method) when he said '... A certain type of Anarchism... contains precisely the kind of Puritanical dedication and seriousness which I detest.

....A Dadaist (an Anarchist of his persuasion) is utterly unimpressed by any serious enterprise and he smells a rat whenever people stop smiling and assume that attitude and those facial expressions which indicate that something important is about to be said.' There is a lot to be said for such a philosophy, the full meaning of which would require a close reading of Feyerabend's context. The interesting point also is that Against Method is a scathing critique of 'official science' if ever there was one.

One trap Nigel Pennick fell right into was his immediate appeal to the advance of science itself - its very own method. Thus Engel's followers were deluded because of the adherence to the then mechanistic view of the Universe only by contrast to the (much better and presumably not-so-mechanistic) 'post quantum physics'. It is the same with the 'simplistic ideas of Darwin' and the by implication much more authoritative scenario of 'modern genetics and molecular biology'. Surely one cannot have one's cake and eat it in such a context. I would take issue with the bald statement about Darwin in any case. Firstly most of us would agree that Kropotkin took a fairly direct view of the efficacy of science - in the form that Nigel Pennick is attempting to criticise. Yet it was (as is well known in our circles) Mutual Aid that tried to redress the imbalance taken by Huxley in emphasizing the 'red in tooth and claw' competitiveness in Darwinism. Kropotkin to his everlasting credit deeply enquired about the symbiotic and synergistic elements in Darwin as well as from a wider view. He did this at a time when the ruthless



capitalistic ethic of Victorian times was still running at full current and all that was heard was the Huxlian emphasis. Kropotkin was far before his time. It is interesting to see that Darwin too was very concerned with all the cooperative and mutualist behaviour he saw in the biosphere.

The general theme of Nigel Pennick's anti-science contribution is one that we know Anarchism as a philosophy must soon get to grips with. Implicit in his note I believe is the observation that it has not done so with very much effect as yet. I must agree with that important point. Except for the important work of Feyerabend that I have cited most of the alternative thinking on these lines has and is coming from outside the Anarchist field in such areas as that covered by the paper Undercurrents which I would describe as a slightly Marxist 'New Left' publication. Then there is the work done by the BSSRS and similar groups which criticise the ideology of science, but again quite outside the Anarchist tradition.

There is another assertion by Nigel Pennick that does not stand up to reality. He claims that if there was concrete evidence of the paranormal, in other words pragmatic results which worked, then it would threaten livelihoods and reputations of scientists. This is very far from the actuality of what would happen. My alternative prediction is that it would immediately make very prestigious new reputations. Research money would suddenly become available. There certainly would be a proliferation of new research journals (Annals of the Psychodynamic Institute, Proceedings of Telepathic Information Theory...) and all this would grow exponentially. Finally, the Defence Department would fund research into the advancement of Telekinetic Warfare etc. I admit that real pragmatic results would be required first. In the event, scientist John Taylor spent a long time measuring and actually looking into the 'paranormal' (Uri Geller and all that) with papers actually appearing in Nature at one point. The fact that all has faded

away shows that no wealth or weapons or metal forming techniques or 'crowd control' applications were ever likely to come from the 'research'.....

But there is another aspect of the argument for the paranormal that must be squarely faced by Anarchist thinkers and that is the use to which most of it is put in providing escape from reality. This is especially true in the external authority offered. Some 'god' will save you in some way. The 'powers that be', be they cosmic 'advanced aliens', spiritual Paranormals, special energy flows from 'out there' and so on, will take the responsibility from you and deliver you from the degenerate state of humanity. All this is very dangerous stuff - it is the real 'opium of the people'. No Anarchist can maintain such escapism surely. Yet this does not justify science as the one true faith, but it puts the para-alternatives into the same ideological danger area.

Of course science is ideological. I have seen it in covert (and often overt) action. Power is accrued by the attempt to decry other forms of knowledge such as tacit knowledge, skill application - perhaps without an orthodox 'theoretical' base, and subjective appreciation. The scientific world view is arrogant in its dismissive attitude to these. But this is a value judgement and can be fought on these grounds. It seems to me that science is firmly moulded by and supports the capitalist mode, both the Western corporate type and the Eastern state capitalism kind. Scientific puritanism drives for monoculture and uniformity and standardisation. Diversity is not particularly comfortable within the norms. Thus it is a view that is conservative and status-quo supporting. The scientist Brian Easlea's remarkable book Liberation and the Aims of Science an Essay on Obstacles to the Building of a Beautiful World is a very interesting and unusual look at what the gruesome continuation of capitalism is doing to us still.

Finally on this point concerning science I have written a short analysis of it for the journal Gandhi

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Marg from a libertarian point of view. This has already produced some interesting responses to the debate. (See Gandhi Marg No 17 August 1980. The article is 'Alternatives Dilemmas: Problems of the Eternal Struggle'.)

One last point raised by Nigel Pennick involves the problem of authority. He makes the blanket statement that Anarchy means 'without authority'. But I and many others would appear to consider that it is nearer 'non-hierarchical' and anti externally applied order from above. That it is not just without authority can be seen in the number of anarchist thinkers who recognise the 'authority of competence' and temporary authority when skills are involved in a project. The opposition is to paternalism based on an oppressive assumed authority by virtue of elitism. Without falling into the semantic difficulties about it here, authoritarianism is the hated syndrome, whereas authoritative is often accepted in the sense of the affinity group and skills offering to a project.

As a last word I think we can all agree with Nigel Pennick's aside 'yes usually his' when Anarchism is being discussed. This is one of the hang-ups with which I certainly have to agree. I have noticed the sexism in many a 'libertarian' meeting - I'm sorry to say.

KEN SMITH

Canterbury
Kent.

Appeal?

I think that your readers are entitled to an explanation (or at least as much as space allows). I have recently written a letter to FREEDOM mentioning the possibility of starting a new regular anarchist magazine 'Autonomy'. The response to this proposition has left me wondering whether the magazine is wanted or not (by comrades that is). The theme of the first issue was to be 'War is the health of the State'. The way I envisaged this issue and further ones was to discuss in them basic anarchist ideas as an introduction to and an argument for anarchism. I have been conscious for a long time that there is a need for such a magazine 'a sincere and serious attempt to use power of thought and writing in

order to assist the establishment of social justice' (George Woodcock)

Many people have met recently have told me 'I have read in FREEDOM that you are starting a magazine' or better still 'how is your magazine going?'

Polite chat aside the only specific offer I have received was from Laurens Otter whose willingness to help I greatly appreciate. Laurens has always been outstandingly generous and had 'Autonomy' no other contributor it would still be worth producing. But paper and printing is so expensive nowadays that any duplication of effort should be avoided. Laurens has reminded me 'that you might have something in common with 'Libertarian' (which now that John Banks has retired and able to devote more time to is coming out regularly).

Yet I believe the interest in anarchism is now so much on the increase that it will soon transform our existing publications. And more than ever a magazine will be needed in which our ideas are freely offered as a contribution to intellectual enquiry.

Therefore I once more appeal for contributions, suggestions and discussion in correspondence. I thank all those who have already written. But I would like to hear from more comrades before I finally commit myself to this task.

John Rety.

...ist?

Dear Comrades

I can't be the only reader who is shocked by the cartoon on the front page of your issue of 25 October, which makes fun of monkeys who are black, old, male, and clothed, and which is therefore speciesist, racist, sexist, and clothist. The next time you publish such a cartoon, it ought to show humans who are white, young, female, and naked -- wait a moment there's something wrong somewhere.

Jean Raison.

ZANU

Dear Friends

Regarding John Broom's first question in relation to ZANU (See FREEDOM letters Vol 41 No 20) I would not seek to engage such a partial and simplistic interpretation

but would, rather, issue a challenge contained in these words:

"... if a revolution begins it must take the form of a widely spread popular movement, during which movement, in every town and village invaded by the insurrectionary spirit the masses set themselves to the work of reconstructing society on new lines... the whole of history shows us that men thrown into government by a revolutionary wave have never been able to accomplish what was expected of them. And this is unavoidable. Because in the task of reconstructing society on new principles, separate men, however intelligent and devoted they may be, are sure to fail. The collective spirit of the masses is necessary for this purpose." Peter Kropotkin 'Modern Science and Anarchism', second edition, Freedom Press, 1923.

"The circulation of certain stale separatist formulae has obliged us to take a position, in as clear as possible a form, seeking to single out what are the important essential points of anarchist internationalism in the face of the problem of the national liberation struggle... Anarchists must give their support, concrete as regards participation, theoretical as regards analyses and study, to national liberation struggles, departing from the autonomous organisation of workers, exposing class counterposition in the correctest way, that is without differentiation regarding the national bourgeoisie, and programming the federal construction of the future society which must rise from the social revolution.... That requires though, in the first place, clarification among ourselves, looking ahead, and constructing the right analyses for a revolutionary anarchist strategy..." Alfred M. Bonanno 'Anarchism and the National Liberation Struggle' Bratach Dubh Anarchist Pamphlet No. 1 (reprint) Glasgow, 1978.

"We should not be surprised, therefore, if the transition from the first stage (national liberation) to the second (libertarian socialism) is long and arduous. In fact, as most third world countries have now realised, this transition will not occur without the education of and active assistance from progressive elements within the western world - and our allies will more than likely be the youths from the forest schools of Mozambique who will be rekindling the historical context throughout the Zimbabwean countryside."

(From the article 'Learning from Zimbabwe' FREEDOM Vol 41 No 18)

Brian Murphy

FREEDOMCONTACTS

INLAND

ABERDEEN Libertarian Group
c/o 163 King St., Aberdeen.

ABERYSTWYTH. David Fletcher,
59 Cambrian St. Aberystwyth.

BARRY. Terry Phillips, 16
Robert St., Barry, South
Glamorgan.

BELFAST Anarchist Collective,
Just Books, 7 Winetavern St.,
Belfast 1.

BIRMINGHAM anarchists/anarcha-
feminists meet Sundays. Con-
tact Alison at Peace Centre,
18 Moore St. Ringway, B'ham 4
(tel. 021 643 0996).

BRIGHTON Libertarian Socialist
group, c/o Students Union,
Falmer House, University of
Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

BRISTOL. City: 4 British Rd.,
Bristol BS3 3BW.
Students: Libertarian Society,
Students Union, Queen's Road,
Bristol.

CAMBRIDGE anarchists, Box A,
41 Fitzroy St., Cambridge.

CANTERBURY Alternative Res-
earch group.
Students Union, University of
Kent, Canterbury.

CARDIFF. Write c/o One-O-Eight
Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road.

COVENTRY. John England, Stud-
ents Union, University of War-
wick, Coventry.

DUBLIN Love V. Power, Whelan's
Dance Studio, 51 South King
Street, Dublin 2.

EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians,
Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gar-
dens, Saffron Walden, Essex.

EXETER anarchist collective, c/
Community Assn., Devonshire
House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.

GLASGOW anarchist group, John
Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue,
Castlemilk, Glasgow G45.

Hastings Anarchists, 18a Markwick
Terrace, Saint Leonard's-on-Sea,
East Sussex. (0424) 420 620.

HULL Libertarian Collective, 16
Park Grove, Hull, N. Humberside.

KEELE anarchist group c/o Stud-
ents Union, The University, Kee
Keele.

Keighley Anarchists, 37 Parkwood
Street, Keighley, BD21 4QH.

LAMPETER anarchist group, c/o
Adian James, S.D.U.C. Lampeter,
Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.

Liverpool Anarchist Group,
c/o Hywel Ellis, Students' Union,
Liverpool University, Liverpool.

LEAMINGTON & Warwick, c/o
42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.

LEEDS Dave Brown, 30 Park Row,
Knaresborough (nr. Harrogate)
N. Yorkshire.

LEICESTER. Blackthorn Books,
74 Highcross St. (tel. Leic.
21896) and Libertarian Educa-
tion, 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel.
Leic. 552085).

L O N D O N :

Anarchist-Feminists write to Box
33 Rising Free, 182 Upper Street,
N1 or leave a message there.

Anarchy Collective, 37a Gros-
venor Ave., N.5 (01-359 4794
before 7 pm). Meets each Thurs-
day from 7 pm at Little A Press,
1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping
Wall, E.1 (22a bus or Wapping
tube).

ANARCHA UNITED MYSTICS meet
each Thursday from 8 pm at the
Half-Way House pub, opposite
Camden Town Tube Station, London.

Freedom Collective, 84B White-
chapel High St (Angel Alley)
E1 (01-247 9249). Aldgate East
tube, nr. Whitechapel Art Gal-
lery.)

Kingston anarchists, 13 Den-
mark Rd., Kingston-upon-
Thames (01 549 2564).

London Workers Group Box W 182
Upper Street N1 (01-249-7042) meets
Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan pub
75 Farringdon Road.

NEW LISTING.....

South London Anarchists c/o Box
33 Rising Free 182 Upper Street N1.

XTRA! Structureless Tyranny,
182 Upper St., Islington, N.1.

MALVERN & Worcester area, Jock
Spence, Birchwood Hall, Stor-
ridge, Malvern, Worcs.

NORWICH anarchists c/o Free-
wheel Community Books, 56 St.
Benedicts St., Norwich, Norfolk.

NOTTINGHAM, c/o Mushroom, 10
Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or
15 Scotholme Ave., Hyson Green
(tel. 708302).

OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14
Westminster Rd., Failsworth,
Manchester.

OXFORD anarchist group, Anarchist
Workers group, Anarcho-Feminists,
and Solidarity, all groups c/o 34
Cowley Road Oxford.

PAISLEY anarchist group are un-
fortunately contactable through
Students Union, Hunter Street,
Paisley, Renfrewshire.

PLYMOUTH Anarchists 115. St. Pan-
cras Ave. Pennycross Plymouth

RHONDDA & Midglamorgan,
Henning Andersen, 'Smiths
Arms', Treherbert, Midglam.

SHEFFIELD anarchists c/o 4
Havelock Square, Sheffield
S10 2FQ.

Libertarian Society: PO Box
168, Sheffield S11 8SE.

SWANSEA Don Williams, 24 Derl-
wyn, Dunvant, Swansea.

SWINDON area. Mike, Grounds-
well Farm, Upper Stratton,
Swindon.

TAYSIDE Anarchist Group 3L 188
Strathmartine Road Dundee

TORBAY anarchist federation,
24 Beverley Rise, Brixham,
Devon.

NATIONAL

MIDLANDS Federation. Secreta-
riat c/o Coventry group.

NORTH EAST Anarchist Federa-
tion - as for Hull.

THAMES VALLEY Anarchist Fed-
eration - contact Oxford group.

DIRECT ACTION Movement, Sec.
c/o Box 20, 164/166 Corn Ex-
change Buildings, Hanging
Ditch, Manchester M14 3BN.

LIBERTARIAN Communist Group
(publ. 'Libertarian Communist'
qtrly), LCG c/o 27 Clerkenwell
Close, London EC1.

SOLIDARITY libertarian commun-
ist organisation (publ. 'Soli-
darity for Social Revolution')
c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E6.
Groups & mems. in many towns.

Events

An exhibition of photo-collages by
Mike Dickinson is being held at
Gay's the Word Community Book-
shop 66 Marchmont Street London
WC1 for two weeks from November
9th. The title of the exhibition is
"Crimes of the Future - and their
Remedy" and it shows various
lunatics wielding their vain power
against the oppressed. It's open
7 days a week from 11am-7pm
it's free and cheap refreshments
are available.

Public meeting 'Medical Ill-Treat-
ment and Secrecy in our Prisons'.
Speakers from Prop Radical Alt-
ernatives to Prison and Friends of
Matthew O'Hara. Thursday 27th
November 8pm at Centerprise,
136 Kingsland High Street, London, E5.
Speakers from the audience esp-
ecially those with prison experience
welcome.

Public Meeting organized by Solid-
arity Manchester at the Star and
Garter, Fairfield Street, Manchester.
Africa - Socialism or Barbarism.
7.45pm Friday 14th November.

Male anarchist (30) seeks flat bed
sit or place in shared house pref-
erably within walking distance of
Caledonian Road failing that any-
where in London. Please contact
Malcolm Hopkins c/o Housmans
5 Caledonian Road Kings Cross
London N1.

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Beyond The Fragments or Beyond The Left ?

This is the text of a leaflet distributed at the Beyond the Fragments conference held a couple of months ago in Leeds. The conference was an attempt to examine the increasing fragmentation and sectarianism which is currently crippling the left.

THE twentieth century has witnessed a dazzling display of political convulsions. It has reached a point where there is no political position which is too ridiculous for some gang of idiots to hold - and this has generally been in the name of socialism! Since the defeat of the revolutionary wave in the period immediately following the first world war - a defeat engendered by the social democrats (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy) and the bolsheviks (Russia, China) - the left has been reduced to a decomposing heap of shit.

The weakness of the proletarian struggle is shown by the fact that it has only surpassed this heap of shit in an isolated way (Poland 1970, France 1968, Italy 1969, various strike waves in Latin America and more recently the wave of strikes in Poland). The present conference has been called in the face of the critical state of decomposition that the left has reached. Its purpose is to lash together some series of compromises so that we may witness the pitiful spectacle of the left limping harmoniously along for a few more years. To this we unashamedly oppose our purpose in coming here - to frustrate any attempts to breathe life into some kind of Frankenstein's monster constructed out of the decaying remains of the political movements of the last two decades. Secondly, we wish to pose the question of proletarian autonomy in opposition to all the permutations of reformism, from the Labour Party to the more exotic Trotskyist sects, in opposition to all bureaucracies whether entrenched in power or merely serving some apprenticeship in grassroots campaigns or an obscure party. All these are parts of the old order, obstacles in the way of the revolutionary struggle to put an end to wage labour once and for all.

THE HISTORY OF THE LEFT

Ever since the working class appeared on the historical stage as the proletariat - as a class specifically exploited through the wages system - it has had to struggle for its own interests against the bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeoisie. In the nineteenth century capital had not developed its real domination over society and for the most part had barely established its formal domination. The working class was only capable of conducting its struggle as a class among all the others. It pursued its interests within capitalism through unions and political parties. Even then they had to struggle against those elements of the bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeoisie who always attempted to submit the working classes to the interests of their social strata.

Following the Paris Commune, this struggle was lost with the collapse of the First International. The Second International was fundamentally based on appeasement with the capitalist system. Marx and Engels put aside

the Critique of the Gotha Programme in favour of unity (it was not published for sixteen years!!!) From that moment any revolutionaries who remained within social democracy remained submerged below the bureaucrats and reformists. Any who showed their heads (e.g. 'The Young People' - die Junge - expelled in 1891) were soon kicked out.

The 'great debates' of social democracy (revisionism vs. orthodoxy, the contributions of Rosa Luxemburg, the split between the bolsheviks and the mensheviks) remained within the framework of social democracy and therefore failed to confront the fact that social democracy (particularly in Germany) was committed to the preservation of capitalism but in a more statified form. The debates failed to shake the grip of reformism, and any attempt to expel factions that constantly compromised themselves with their national governments came to nothing.

The origins of fascism and national socialism lie in social democracy. It was organised on a national basis with separate national programmes. It generally supported its respective governments on the outbreak of the first world war, except when this was not seen as being in the national interest. The fascists merely abandoned the pretence that the whole of society should submit to the national interest, and for this they could not be forgiven.

The Russian revolution was at the forefront of a revolutionary wave that swept the world. The appearance of workers' councils (soviets) provided a framework for the self-organisation of the working classes. From the outset they had to overcome the limitations of the mensheviks. The bolsheviks put out the slogan, 'All power to the soviets.' to ease out



The Rebirth of Spring

mensheviks from influential positions. However as they consolidated themselves in the higher echelons of the state they could kick aside the soviets, which they had used as a ladder to power. They then introduced 'scientific management' and the militarisation of labour to revitalise backward russian capital. (Trotsky shares with Mussolini the dubious distinction of having got the trains to run on time) The suppression of Kronstadt and the Petrograd strikes confirms that the soviets no longer expressed the self-organisation of the working classes, but the bureaucratic organs for the implementation of bolshevik policy.

The Third International never threw off the inheritance of social democracy. Revolutionaries were the first to champion the russian revolution and mistakenly saw the Third International as its international mouthpiece. But whilst the bolsheviks strangled the revolution in Russia, they also saw to it that any revolutionaries in the Third International were pushed out (such as the Communist Workers Party of Germany, KAPD in 1920), reducing the international to an arm of russian diplomacy. The communist parties made peace with capitalism and presented themselves in the elections, the market place of ideologies, offering rival schemes for the reform of capital. The rise to power of a buffoon like Stalin, or the comic posturing of his alter-ego Trotsky could only take place in such a climate.

The direct action of the spanish workers in 1936/7 was quickly subordinated to the needs of the bourgeois republic by the CNT/FAI. Any revolutionary activity was submerged in a preview of the second world war. The whole gamut of the left put its faith in capitalism and imperialism with its support of the allies in this war. Anti-fascism served as a justification for the bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since the war, leftists have been reduced to cheerleaders for russian imperialism (Vietnam) and the rationalisation of production through state owned monopolies. From dissolving the revolutionary project in reformism, the left has gone on to become the ideological spearhead of capitalism.

MODERN SOCIAL RELATIONS

The social and political configurations of modern capitalism have greatly developed over the last hundred years. Fundamentally capital has extended its real domination over society (see Capital Vol. 1. Chap. 6. and the 'resultate'. Also 'The Wandering of Humanity' by Cammatte.) This has several results: The elimination or marginalisation of the traditional petit bourgeoisie. In the industrialised countries they have been integrated into the larger formations of capital, in the less industrialised countries either this has happened or they have been reduced to the shanty town level of existence. As their star has waned they have been replaced by the growing ranks of apparatchniks, the technocrats and bureaucrats, the social workers and the professionals of the mediation of social conflict. This social layer has retained no political independence of capitalism. While they moan about the disastrous manifestations of the contradictions inherent in capitalism, they are never prepared to take this to the point of opposing the fundamental causes. These layers constitute the heartland of leftism and betray its inability to reform itself. Picking over the remains of the class struggle they are only prepared to adopt and champion those tactics or aspects that have proven themselves as useless as regards a politics of the actual overthrow of capital.

Unions have been completely integrated into the management of capitalism. Any idea of revolutionary change, which was present at the turn of the century in syndicalist circles, has completely disappeared. Unionism is nothing more than the practice of reformism in the workplace. They have become a section of the state particularly sensitive to the mood of the workers. They are always ready to push for changes that will help capital function more smoothly in the face of workers' demands, or that will increase the range of power of their particular fief. In disputes the most they can offer is assistance in a legal manner - i.e. upholding the rule of law as regards industrial relations. Thus on the one hand they help workers as individuals with their grievances where according to bourgeois law the bosses have overstepped the mark, whilst on the other hand they frustrate the general struggle of the working class which must be beyond the law, which must confront the law that they protect. In this way the Unions can

properly be described as the police force of the shop floor. When they row with other capitalist factions such as with the Tories over the employment law, they merely react like any other police force when its powers are threatened with limitations. This struggle is to ensure that their powers are duly codified in the statute book.

Since the nineteenth century reforms removed women and children from whole areas of work, the nuclear family has evolved as the particular form of the family in bourgeois society. In this way work in the home has become dominated by capital although housewives are not waged workers. Campaigns such as 'Wages for Housework' rather than providing a fruitful basis for struggle merely make this relation clearer, and underline the necessity for a struggle against the global domination of capital. The struggle for the liberation of women must be seen as an essential moment in the struggle for communism. But it is not possible to reduce the subjugation of women to this formal aspect. All this sexist shit with which this society abounds has its material basis in the way which we are obliged to survive. Capital has only half-digested the old patriarchal relations of feudal times. Whilst patriarchy is not formally a necessary part of capitalism (i.e. it is possible to describe the essence of capitalism without reference to it) it is an historical necessity due to the social relations which preceded its dominance. Faced with the possibility of the physical disintegration of the working class in the nineteenth century, it was necessary to assure the reproduction of the workers through the 'family wage' and the nuclear family. This involved the famous victorian suppression of sexuality. Now sexuality has re-emerged in a distorted form whereby it is part of commodity relations. One aspect of this is the presentation of women as sexual objects to be consumed by men.

Imperialism has become a permanent feature of the capitalist economy. National liberation has been reduced beyond farce (the Easter Rising, Dublin 1916) to the readjustment of capitalist exploitation. The inability of China to maintain an independent line vis-a-vis the twin superpowers of the Soviet Union and the USA shows that the prospect of independence for less powerful countries is out of the question. Even the illusion of independence is disappearing as *entente* is being eroded by international tensions. Imperialism as a generalised phenomenon revolves around two poles, Moscow and Washington. The other nations can only aspire to the dubious freedom of choosing their own masters. All the national liberation wars can only offer to harness popular discontent to the rationalisation of the state. If they do not have a strategic importance they will fail to get the backing of the rival imperialism (eg. Ireland). The only resolution of global imperialism will be generalised war. The pious statements of the lefties in the Labour Party only offer an insipid form of pacifism which proved its weakness in 1914. It will do nothing to impede the progression towards war. This can only be checked by class struggle leading to world revolution which will end the causes which spawn these belligerent tensions.

PERSPECTIVES OF "BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS"

All this shows that it is necessary to oppose the 'left'. All the debate around 'Beyond the fragments' has thrown up is superficial and structural criticism of the left. Is it surprising that the left (unions, campaigns, the Labour Party, and all the lesser parties whether Stalinist, Trotskyist or Maoist) is hierarchical, sexist and continues to throw up a steady stream of 'traitors'. Its function is that of a protective flank to capitalism. Discontent is steered into institutionalised channels. A vast apparatus has been 'built', providing lots of little niches for careerists to make themselves at home in.

The left is rotten to the core. The rival factions wrestle with each other in attempt to capture the hearts and minds of the workers. They make tactical concessions to the autonomy of the proletariat in order to carry out their strategic priority: a return to the more ordered terrain of reformism and the bolstering of their political base. This strategy is obscured by a thin veil of 'revolutionary' verbiage. An example of when this thin veil slipped: during the Lewisham riot of 1977, when young blacks came out to violently confront both the NF and the police, an SWP member with a megaphone was calling on the rioters to desist from their physical attack on their immediate oppressors. They merely paused for a while to

stone this representative of law and order. Of course there are other examples that concern all the other groups.

"Beyond the Fragments" goes no further than attempt to reform reformism. It attempts to bury the fundamental tension between reform (the self-revolutionising tendency of capitalism) and revolution (the abolition of capitalism). This tension is lost in a debate on the tangential aspects of leftism - this is not to deny their importance but to assert that they result from the function of leftism. Like capitalism as a whole the left is in crisis. Its pleas for people to mobilise behind it fall on deaf ears. (eg. the fiasco of the 14th. May, day of 'action'). Those people involved in the left who have a greater sensitivity to the movement of the class and to their own frustrations are well represented at this conference. There are also those here who are essentially involved in a flight from reality - horrified by the social decay they see around them, they retreat into even more vacuous phraseology. Disenchanted with the left, they entertain liberal illusions that are ridiculous even by the standard of the old nineteenth century utopians. To these we have nothing to say - they understand nothing anyway. It is to the former we address ourselves.

There are also the cynical manipulators.....
BEYOND THE LEFT. PERSPECTIVES OF AUTONOMY.

We assert the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in opposition to bourgeois ideology, whether in the garb of the traditional bourgeoisie or dressed up in the beautiful red livery of the left.

We reject the subordination of communism to the scant attainments which can be obtained in day to day struggle (and which are so rapidly snatched back). Daily practice must unite the immediate struggle with the overall project in an open and honest way. (No more of the idea of 'tricking' the workers into being revolutionary through Trotskyist transitional demands.)

We refuse to speak for or to represent the class i.e. we represent ourselves as a fraction of the revolutionary movement, no more, no less. As such we present our views as just that, our views. We do this forcefully so as to be heard. We expect others to do the same. We claim no privileges. We are not a vanguard. We do not seek followers or converts but equal partners in the revolutionary movement. We are not sectarian. What liberals seek to pass off as sectarianism is no more than our intransigence against the most highly developed forms of capitalist ideology.

We call for all struggles to be conducted through direct democracy - instantly revocable delegation, decisions made by mass meetings, etc., with the exclusion of representatives of the bourgeois order i.e. union officials, politicians etc.

No abandonment of the struggle against sexism, racism or nationalism for some illusion of unity. If there is conflict in these fields it must be tackled from the outset.

Revolution is changing social relations not just seizing power. Consciousness changes through action. We fight as much to change ourselves as to change the objective limitations we suffer from. These two aspects are inseparable.

These are policies of confrontation - we must face the reality of capitalism and realise that socialism is more than just a few cheap words. We are serious. We recognise that political activity is not all beer and skittles, that we are likely to be the subject of repression. (It has already started). Those who are not prepared to face this unpleasantness should stop playing at socialism. (They will not however be able to escape the increasing misery of capitalism.)

We have spoken of the proletariat in this piece. We want to clarify the use of this term. We are not trying to create some new kind of workerism. We recognise that modern capitalism has heightened class divisions at the same time as having mystified them. The proletariat is defined politically. It includes all those who are excluded from wealth and power, whose lives are directly dominated by capital, who have to live on the left-overs of the bourgeoisie and their hangers on, it includes all these in their collective struggle. It specifically excludes all those who live by the manipulation of others - teachers, social workers, journalists, administrators etc.

Our analysis does not have all the answers, but it poses some important questions. We have not had the opportunity in this leaflet to discuss all the relevant areas. We hope we have drawn out a coherent approach. Many questions still have to be tackled, i.e. what form will the unitary organs of the proletariat take in the light of the contemporary form of capitalism, how will the division of production and reproduction be overcome, and that of city and countryside and town, of different levels of development. However these questions can only be tackled as the communist movement emerges from its long sleep, as the working class starts again to assert its own autonomy.

BOX 666.C/O RISING FREE, 182 UPPER STREET, LONDON N1

Unionism in Italy



Translator's note: In Italy most workers are organized in unions according to political/religious affiliation not by Trade. Therefore in translating the word 'Syndicati' (as in Syndicalism) I have used either Workers Unions or simply Unions.

*Cassa Integrazione is a system whereby a worker is laid off but still receives a minimal wage from the employer. It is usually followed by sacking.

"At the same time that our organisations have received maximum recognition as institutions, our real power is at a minimum," admitted with disappointment Franco Bentivogli, national secretary of the engineering workers. After years of "reassuring victories", could it be that we are at the beginnings of a crisis for the Italian workers' unions. It seems to be so, even though the unions' climb to power has been unabated for the past thirty years. Today, union leaders are periodically consulted by the government. The management must agree with the unions on work and production programmes. The IMF, when lending money to Italy, is not satisfied with only the guarantees of the Treasury but also seeks the unions' commitment to maintaining the economic programme and certain cuts in public spending. A power that has few equals in Europe. A power that has grown in leaps and bounds since the struggles for autonomy in 1969. Just at the time of its major crisis, when the workers' struggles became autonomous, overriding the union bureaucracy, we observed its revival. The shock, traumatic as it was, resolved itself into a healthy strengthening. The union leaders' ability to take over again showed acute political intelligence. Criticised harshly by the left, having thrown into disorder the traditional structures from

the birth of the united shopfloor committees and later the factory committees, the union bosses reimposed their own strategy for the control of workers' struggles, reducing the committees to peripheral appendages of the union structure. Even more striking if we consider the rise in membership. In 1968 paid-up members of CGIL (made up of Communists and Socialists), of CISL (Catholics) and UIL (Socialists, Republicans and Social Democrats) numbered 4,731,848; in 1973 this total had risen to 6,433,495, and by 1978 to 8,453,399. This is out of a total of about 20 million workers (of whom 14,101,000 are employees), so it represents a level of unionisation of 59.9 per cent, among the highest in Europe, lower only than that in Britain. The strongest body is the CGIL, which organises 53 per cent of the unionised workers, followed by the CISL with 33.3 per cent and the UIL with 13.7 per cent.

A union (we may use the singular, because even though there are three they nearly always work together as a team, even if the process of unification begun a few years ago has suffered many setbacks), then, which "controls" a large part of the workers, generally the more militant and politicised, which can count on large amounts of money coming in. The sum of the contributions in 1979 came to 60 milliard lire (£30 million) for the CGIL, 40 milliards (£20 million) for the CSIL, and 20 milliards (£10 million) for the UIL. This revenue has become constant because of the "delegated contribution" system. When workers are taken on, they fill in a form which delegates to the management the job of paying their union contributions which are withheld from their pay-packets. This continues until the worker decides to withdraw. In this way the union is assured of a constant flow of money which allows them to build up a considerable bureaucracy. The CGIL employs 8,000 people, of whom 6,000 are full-time and 2,000 are "borrowed" from factories, businesses, &c. The CSIL has 6,000 employees, of whom 4,000 are salaried and 2,000 are "borrowed" or part-time. The UIL has 3,200 employees, of whom 2,300 are full-time, almost 300 are part-time administrators, and the rest are part of the "technical apparatus". The "borrowed" workers are so called

because even though they are part of the union apparatus they receive their pay from their place of original employment; in this way the union can count on a large number of full-time activists being paid for by the "business counterpart". The wages of these union workers are, in the main, the same as other workers in industry. 66.7 per cent of them earn between 400,000 and 600,000 lire (£200-£300) a month, 31.6 per cent between 600,000 and 900,000 lire (£300-£450), and 1.7 per cent over 900,000 lire (£450+) a month.

But the union apparatus doesn't end there. The previously mentioned struggles of 1969 brought about the birth of the "Union of Councils", and thousands of workers gained the right to carry on union work within the factories during working hours. The approximately 4,000 "borrowed" workers are only a small part of the new class of peripheral unionists. In 1977 in Italy there were about 32,000 councils with 206,000 delegates representing 5,188,000 workers. An impressive political apparatus with branches everywhere, 70 per cent in northern Italy. The influence of the union doesn't stop at this political machine for the control of conflicts, but for several years has gained a measure of control in state institutions. According to recent research, union representatives are present, with directors' powers, on many of the economic and political decision-making bodies of the state. They sit on many committees attached to 17 ministries, as well as some connected with the cabinet, on various government economic institutions (consultative bodies of the CIP - Interministerial Committee of Prices and planning bodies), in the health and social security departments (unionist majority in the Administrative Council of the INPS) and a myriad other bodies, boards and various local, provincial and regional committees. Besides these there are the 63 biggest public institutions (those that have a budget of over 1 milliard (£500,000) in which the union has 283 representatives; this constitutes 22.7 per cent of the total administering councillors.

The influence of this legion of unionists installed in the state machine can be better understood if we analyse the importance of the INPS (National Institute of Social Welfare).



ARTHUR MOYSE

"We are the third biggest institution after the Bank of Italy and the IRI" declared its director in 1977. In fact the INPS administers 65 milliards (£32.5 m.); it controls the national insurance contributions of 23 million workers, it supplies about 13,000,000 pensions and has contribution agreements with 1,200,000 businesses; it receives annually 8,000,000 requests for loans (from pensions to supplementary benefits for families, from insurance against unemployment to savings). It has over 25,000 employees.

If these lists of facts, figures, statistics and percentages don't seem to leave any doubt as to the power of the unions in Italian politics, there is, though, a consideration which minimises this power. The mechanism of subscription and delegated contributions to the management develops an automatism that, on the one hand, produces a stiffening of the unionising procedure - above all with regard to the maintenance and enlargement of the number of subscribers - and on the other hand tends to perpetuate a high level of 'formal' organisation. This is so even when confronted with a loss of consensus with the union's strategy, undermining the real process of legitimisation of the union. Already some of the union's analysts denounce this fact as the most worrying consequence of the introduction of the 'delegation': a formally strong union, but effectively powerless in the administration of conflicts. This, however, is more of a potential problem than an actuality, even though many of the recent struggles were born outside the union or even against it. It is enough to remember the struggles of the hospital workers, air stewards and hostesses, the railway workers etc. As well as the flowering of autonomous unions - from the pilots' to the teachers', from the bank clerks' to the civil servants', from the railway workers' to the tiny unions of mini-categories of professionals. The attitudes to this phenomenon vary considerably. Agostino Marianetti of the CGIL claims that the membership of autonomous unions totals 525,000, while Salvati, president of CISAL, one of the autonomous unions, declares that the membership of CISAL alone is over 1,000,000.

The autonomous unions are nearly always guilty of corporatism, *qualunquismo* ('anythinggoesism' - eds-) and also right wing infiltration. If in many cases criticisms are in line with reality, it is also true that the attacks of the mass media against the autonomous unions are very often instrumental in accrediting only those struggles which the three 'official' unions have agreed on beforehand. For example, the struggles of the autonomous railway workers' union were attacked in all the press as irresponsible, provocative and corporative; a very different attitude was presented when the confederation was seen to be forced to call strikes for similar reasons to those of the autonomists. So there exists a double standard: the autonomous strikes are always criticised, while the confederal ones are seen as 'just, responsible, necessary'. However, the confrontation between the 'official' unions and 'autonomous' unions is still within the same union system that sees in its number of members the justification to use its power in the economic institutions. Official unions would like to eliminate from the political scene the autonomists who, by their existence, compromise their almost total monopoly of social conflict (i.e. the thing which legitimises the unions as one of the power blocs in industrially advanced western society). In fact in the historical context (with the developing technobureaucratisation of the economy and consequent emergence of a powerful new class in place of the capitalist/employer) the union has become one of the three mainstays of the power structure together with the political parties and management. Analysed in this way the union bosses are seen to occupy all the posts of the new power elite. They differ from the other two components of this elite - the political class and the economic leaders - in that they take their legitimisation of power from their ability to control workers' struggles, to make them fit into the system as predictable variables in the production/distribution process. To perpetuate and develop this power the union leaders must conserve the consent of the workers, i.e. their power base. Only in this way can they present themselves as being of equal strength in the fight with the political class and the economic leaders.

The search for consent among the workers is therefore one of the preeminent activities of the unions. This physiological necessity has contributed to making the union the body that in the last ten years has been able to renovate itself

the most. The crisis in 1969 worked like an immunological vaccination, giving it new strength. Within this logic was brought about a shrewd and well thought out process of coopting the most energetic and critical workers, creating an accentuated mobility in the middle level of its hierarchy. This mobility has also made possible the maintenance of increased rigidity at the top: the big bosses in the unions are practically immovable.

Parallel to the growth of union power in society is a growth in power over the workers at the top of the union. This latter process is not only a reflection of the former, but finds its *raison d'être* in the changed economic conditions and psychology of the worker, the new working class.

Luis Mercier Vega explains this new situation well: 'If the work is purely mechanical, the workers themselves, interchangeable components of the enormous machine made up by the factory or industrial complex, aware that they are easily replaceable, look for security, guarantees that will protect them. Because at the end of the day they have only their ability to work to offer, they will look to the political parties - who vote special laws - or to the unions, institutions with which the management must discuss ... Their situation is that of a (baral, parcelled) spare part - it takes from them any desire to make something of themselves, any desire for self-control or responsibility, and forces them to depend on organisations they do not control, of which they neither determine the means nor the ends ... They lose - if ever they had it - the prospect of social change, in which they could take a responsible part. They can still, and often do, have faith in a political party, in a union directive, in a saviour. What has been lost is a faith in their own ability (cf. *Azione Diretta e Autogestione Operaia*, Edizioni Antistato, Milano 1979).

This transformation of the working class follows the phase, as Georges Lapassade observed, "... of professional competence (still close to craftsmanship) with the workers highly skilled, the workers' unions being 'trade' unions, governed essentially by a professional aristocracy. To this phase corresponds the ideology of anarchosindicalism. These trade unions are not bureaucratic and the number of militants is small". While the actual situation is "that of large factories and long production lines, with their use of manual labour. This is where you reach the bottom in the work alienation scale. These workers in the phase that still dominates industry are deeply passified by the technical conditions of their work. As a result they delegate all the strength they have to fight for their freedom to union and political bureaucracies, which adopt, on the other hand, for their internal organisation, the traditional models of bureaucratic organisation" (cf. *Groupes, Organisations et Institutions*, Gauthier-Villars, Paris 1974).

A passive working class, therefore, but one in which the ferment of conflict remains, a class still capable of criticising the union bosses, but constitutionally incapable of taking over for itself the means of struggle in general, and which, even where partial struggles are concerned, must go through the mediation of the centralised confederation to their counterparts in management. In this way the conflict that is expressed autonomously has, as a final result, the stirring up of the official union structure. The effect, however, is not one-sided. If, on the one hand, there is the stirring up of the union, on the other there is the psychological crisis of the shopfloor delegates. Last links in the bureaucratic chain, they are in direct contact with the reality of the factory and are the targets for their workmates' criticism. At the same time they are in difficulty with the professional unionists who accuse them of being incapable of imposing the union line, decided on from above. So, this powerful union, capable of affecting political decisions, coopted into responsibility for the administration of the economy, is structurally weak at the base. Its fortunes depend on an equilibrium alternating between institutional aspects and its 'movement' aspects. These last years have seen the rise to pre-eminence of the former to the detriment of the latter.

The co-administration of power reduces the ability to mobilise. Moreover, the worsening economic climate has restricted room for manoeuvre. Tens of thousands of workers now see one of their few certain gains - a job - under

discussion. Cassa Integrazione (*) and redundancies are being asked for by the businesses. Fiat, the largest private firm in Italy, want to 'cassa integrate' to zero hours for 18 months, 24,000 workers and at the end of that period sack 8,000 and give 4,000 an early pension. Consultations between the union leaders and Fiat began in September, but the firm's intransigence leaves little room for manoeuvre. The Treasury, meanwhile, has begun meetings with the three big union leaders (Lama, Carniti, Benvenuto) to plan the economic programme. The union leaders presented different positions at these meetings (a rare occurrence). The CGIL refuses to cooperate with the ministry, the CISNAL is uncertain, and the UIL is definitely for collaboration. One thus sees a subdivision of parts: on one side the big firms want to make tens of thousands of workers redundant, putting the prestige of the unions in jeopardy; on the other the government wants to co-opt the unions in the drafting of a medium term economic plan, in other words recognise it as a privileged and esteemed interlocutor.

This situation places the unions in a predicament. If they do not use 'decisive methods' in their conflict with the firms, they risk greatly compromising their leadership of the working class movement; in using these methods they risk compromising 'the compatibility of the system' it should control with the government.

A difficult situation to be sure, and one which in theory increases the possibilities for the emergence of rank and file based unions. But these possibilities, and, it is worth repeating, only exist in theory because there does not, in reality, exist an anti-institutional movement capable of filling the void. The USIL (Italian Syndicalist Union), the recognised libertarian union, is little more than a name and relies on a very small number of militants with little influence in the world of work. Also, its troubled existence is made even more precarious by internal disputes between the supporters of various factions over its constitutions. The 'direct action' formula was accepted with a notable range of interpretations, as was its organisational structure, and during its period of reconstruction there were different opinions. In fact the USIL today is only a part of the anarchosyndicalist movement in Italy. Another part can be found in the Direct Action committees whose unofficial organ is the magazine *Autogestione* (Self-Management). On these two 'bodies' falls the additional weight of the general political crisis which is affecting the whole of the revolutionary left. This crisis has returned after ten years of social conflict, but today they are but a pale reminder, a sad topic of discussion for the remnants of the 'lost revolution'. Anarchosyndicalism of course still has a few cards to play, but the confrontation with the powerful centralised unions is too unequal to allow for hope of any concrete results. Apart from this it remains to be asked whether autonomous struggles are best served by a syndicalist organisation, even when this is libertarian in character, or whether a stable structure is more able to respond to these events than one or more 'fluid' organisations, born and dying in strict relationship with the causes of conflict which created them. Sadly, various opposed and unconciliatory needs are in conflict: on one side there is the need for stable organisations which, by their nature, will act as a point of reference and attraction for the 'rebel workers'; on the other there is the need for the promulgators of a radical anti-institutional struggle which must express itself without contractions and should be capable of avoiding the creation of mini-institutions.

This is a big dilemma, maybe an insurmountable one. Meanwhile the panorama becomes always more blurred. The economic crisis shows no signs of going away, mass redundancies are in the air. Will the legendary anger of the workers explode. I think not. But as always, hope is the last to die.

LUCIANO LANZA
(Trans: S.S.)

This article was originally written in Italian for 'Aidea-bilboa'. The author also thought that we might like it.

Anarchist Schools

THE MODERN SCHOOL MOVEMENT: Anarchism and Education in the United States. By Paul Avrich. Princeton University Press. £16.50, paperback £7.10.

available from Freedom Bookshop

IT IS hardly necessary to praise a new book by Paul Avrich. Thirteen years ago he established himself in a single stride as one of the leading historians of the anarchist movement in the English-speaking world, with the publication of the standard history of *The Russian Anarchists* (1967); and since then he has steadily strengthened his position with a series of books which he has written or edited or encouraged.

For the first part of his career, beginning in the early 1960s, he specialised in the Russian movement, adding to his first book an authoritative monograph on *Kronstadt 1921* (1970), a pioneering history of *Russian Rebels 1600-1800* (1972), and an illuminating anthology of *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* (1973), as well as new editions of *Michael Bakunin's God and the State* (1970), *Peter Kropotkin's In Russian and French Prisons* (1971), *The Conquest of Bread* (1972) and *Mutual Aid* (1972), and *Alexander Berkman's What Is Communist Anarchism?* (1972). At the same time he took a less public but just as productive part in stimulating writers and publishers to produce many other works on anarchist history; and there has also been a stream of remarkable scholarly articles, some in *FREEDOM*.

For the second part of his career, beginning in the early 1970s, Avrich has turned to the American movement. In the preface to his definitive biography of *Voltaire de Cleyre, An American Anarchist* (1978), he explained that he had originally intended "to produce a comprehensive history of American anarchism from its seventeenth-century origins until recent years, embracing the individualists and collectivists, the native Americans and immigrants, the pacifists and revolutionists, and their libertarian schools and colonies", but that this project soon burst the bounds of a single book, so he eventually decided instead "to tell the story of American anarchism through the lives of selected figures who, in large measure, shaped the destiny and character of the movement". In this 'biographical history of a movement', he added, "every effort will be made to portray the anarchists as they really were, rather than as they have appeared in the fantasies of policemen and journalists and not a few historians, who have neglected to look up the sources from which any reliable study must be made".

The *Modern School Movement*, which is the second instalment of this vast enterprise, is therefore not a scholastic academic analysis or a sensational journalistic exposure of a dead political experiment, but a significant collective biography of the men and women (and children) who for half a century kept alive in the United States an idea planted in Spain by *Francisco Ferrer*. The result is at the same time one of the best studies of English-speaking anarchism and of libertarian education ever written.

The book begins with an account of the life and death of Ferrer, one of the most remarkable figures in the most remarkable national movement in anarchist history. He was born in Catalonia in 1859, became a Freemason and Republican, took part in various subversive activities, took refuge in France in 1885, became an atheist and anarchist, worked as a teacher, and decided to start a school back in Spain, which was made possible by a legacy from a rich sympathiser. The *Modern School* existed in Barcelona from 1901 to 1906. Ferrer combined the theoretical tradition of the leading anarchist writers with the practical tradition



Emblem of the Modern School Association, designed by Rockwell Kent in 1917.

of the leading educational reformers. His school was rationalist and libertarian, free from both church and state, from both religion and patriotism, from both rewards and punishments, teaching boys and girls together on a basis of scientific knowledge and practical experience. Its growth was rapid and its influence was wide, but it was suppressed by the authorities after an anarchist attack on the King of Spain in 1906. Ferrer was himself accused of complicity in the attack, and detained for a year before being acquitted for lack of proof. (Avrich accepts his innocence, discounting the contrary evidence offered in 1968 by Joaquín Romero Maura, even though this includes subsequent testimony by Ferrer's close colleagues.)

Ferrer then toured Western Europe for two years, publicising his educational ideas and gaining much agreement and assistance, but in 1909 he was accused of complicity in the Barcelona rising known as the Tragic Week. This time the authorities were more successful, despite his obvious innocence, and after a mock military trial he was shot on 13 October 1909. His last words were: "Long live the Modern School!" The martyrdom of Ferrer was an international scandal, in which his militant anarchism was played down and he was cried up as an innocent educator, rationalist and liberal perhaps but neither revolutionary nor libertarian, and his work received far more favourable publicity after his death than during his life. His example was soon followed by the foundation of similar schools in more than a dozen countries around the world, and the Ferrer movement in the United States, which lasted longest of all, is the subject of the rest of the book. (The comparable movement in Britain doesn't seem to have been studied by anyone yet.)

There are only a few pages about American libertarian education before 1909, which rather belies the book's subtitle. It would be interesting to know more about the educational influence of Robert Owen, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and the educational activity of William Maclure, Joseph Neef, Josiah Warren, John A. Collins, A. Bronson Alcott and Marietta Pierce Johnson. As Avrich himself says, the first Modern Schools in America showed "a marked continuity with their predecessors", and it may be that their influence was stronger than that of Ferrer himself. But this is a subject for another book, and the remaining 300 pages of this one are about American libertarian education after 1909.

Within a year of Ferrer's death, the Francisco Ferrer Association was formed and Alexander Berkman started a Sunday school in New York City, and within a few more years Modern Schools spread across the country. Avrich lists more

than thirty which were part of or close to the Ferrer movement during the subsequent half-century, including some German, Italian and Spanish schools. Most were short-lived and little-known, and take up only a few pages. The best-known and longest-lived were the Ferrer Modern School which was founded in New York City in 1911, moved to Stelton, NJ, in 1915, and lasted until 1953; the Mohegan Modern School at Crompond, NY, which lasted from 1924 to 1941; and the Modern School at Lakewood, NJ, which lasted from 1933 to 1958.

There are separate chapters on the New York School, on the associated Ferrer Center which lasted from 1911 to 1918 and was the focus of a lively political and cultural scene, on some of the leading activists in the movement, on the Lexington Avenue bomb of 1914 which led to the departure from New York, on the various stages of the Stelton school, on the Mohegan school, and on the decline and fall of the movement. Avrich is at his best in this detailed narrative history. He has been able to use unpublished as well as published source material, and also interview dozens of people from the movement. Those who were involved or associated at one time or another make a remarkable list. At first there were socialists like Jack London and liberals like Clarence Darrow as well as anarchists like Emma Goldman, but the movement was generally dominated by anarchists, including leading figures from Voltairine de Cleyre at the beginning to Rudolf Rocker at the end. There were also many people better known in other connections -- Margaret Sanger the birth-control pioneer, Will Durant the philosopher, Eugene O'Neill the dramatist, Man Ray the artist, Mike Gold the novelist, Joseph Ishill the printer, and many more (not to forget the children of the Rosenbergs and the mother of Joan Baez).

But Avrich also gives full attention to the obscurer people in the movement who gave their lives to anarchist organisation and libertarian education -- activists like Leonard Abbott, Harry Kelly and Joseph Cohen, benefactors like Alden Freeman and Prynns Hopkins, and teachers like Robert and Delia Hutchinson, Elizabeth and Alexis Ferm, Jim and Nellie Dick. The Dicks are particularly attractive. They were a British couple -- Jim had run a Ferrer school in Liverpool as early as from 1908 to 1911, and Nellie (then Naomi Ploschansky) had run one in the East End of London from 1912 to 1916 -- but during the First World War they married and emigrated to the United States, where they ran various schools from 1917 to 1953. For many years Jim was in frequent touch with A. S. Neill at Summerhill, and many years later Nellie maintained her principles intact, telling Avrich in an interview in 1972: "My views on education have remained essentially the same -- just being human to the children." Not a bad slogan.

There are dozens of well-told human stories in these pages, much success and much failure, both happiness and unhappiness, both achievement and disappointment. On one side, Alexis Ferm remarked soon before his death in 1971, at the age of 101: "I am leaving the world worse than I found it." On the other, the Modern Schools surely made the world better than they found it; Suzanne Hotkine, who taught at Stelton in 1924-1925, told Avrich in an interview in 1973: "I came for a day, stayed for a year, and it became part of me for ever." Some stories are more equivocal. Will Durant, who ran the New York school from 1912 to 1913, left when he fell in love with a fourteen-year-old pupil, Ida Kaufman; they married when she was fifteen (and he was twenty-seven) and have lived happily ever after as one of the most successful writing partnerships in the world, authors of the best-selling *Story of Philosophy* and *Story of Civilisation*, and in 1977 recipients of the Medal of Freedom from President Gerald Ford!

Avrich's biographical approach keeps up this human interest, but leaves readers to draw their own conclusions. One is that the Ferrer movement was the most important American source of libertarian theory and practice from before the First World War until after the Second World War. Another is that, as usual, it depended on a few determined activists and generous benefactors. Yet another is that the most successful schools were associated with successful cultural or communal activities; Avrich emphasises the contribution of the Ferrer Center to New York artistic and literary life before and during the

First World War, and records that Stelton was "the longest experiment in anarchist education and communal living in American history" (Britain can boast longer experiments in each -- Neill's Summerhill now being 56 years old, and White-way Colony 82 -- but not in both together).

The final irony is that the Modern School Association -- as the Francisco Ferrer Association became in 1916 -- was dissolved just before the revival of libertarian politics and education in the early 1960s. Subsequent events and later effects are dismissed in a few pages at the end of the book, but it would be interesting to know more about the real impact of Ferrerist theory and practice in the United States, and indeed about the real impact of the Modern Schools on the children themselves. Some historical threads are not followed up -- the connections of the American Ferrer movement with similar movements in other countries, with the rest of the anarchist

movement and the free education movement in America, and with the ethical movement and the moral education movement which were both strong before the First World War -- but the important thing is that this particular episode is at last properly described on its own account rather than as an aspect of anarchism, communism or free education, and the job will never have to be done again. Once more Paul Avrich has put us deeply in his debt, as we add this big (and dear) book to his others.

Avrich concludes with an article Harry Kelly wrote in 1921: "We make no claim to saving the world. We are but trying to save our own 'souls'," he said. "If we have not reached the promised land, we have at least stumbled into one of its by-paths, and that is something." More than just something.

NW

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